

Drug Courts

Program Description

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Nationwide, 80 percent of all offenders in the criminal justice system—about 1.4 million individuals—are substance abusers, and two-thirds of the three million probationers under court supervision are involved in alcohol or drugs. Despite the overwhelming prevalence of substance abuse, only about three percent of drug-using offenders participate in drug court programs. Drug treatment courts must focus on a broad population if they are to have a substantial impact.

Drug treatment courts involve comprehensive programs that include frequent drug testing, supervision, treatment, judicial monitoring, and court-mandated sanctions. Drug treatment courts also serve to generate new levels of program coordination within the criminal justice system, creating partnerships with community organizations, fostered collaboration between governmental agencies, inspired judicial leadership, and forged innovative linkages with law enforcement.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Drug treatment court systems offer an integrated, systematic approach to dealing with a broad range of drug-using offenders including juveniles and adults. Drug treatment courts represent an enhancement of community supervision by closely supervising drug offenders in the community, placing and retaining drug offenders in treatment programs, providing treatment and related services to offenders who have not received such services in the past. The benefits of drug treatment courts include generating cost savings when offenders' reliance on the service delivery system is ultimately or eventually reduced and especially when drug courts reduce reliance on jail and prisons. Drug Courts have been found to substantially reduce drug use and recidivism while offenders are in the program.

LIMITATIONS

Although funding is open to DUI, adult, juvenile, family drug courts, and new drug courts that have gone through or are going through the Federal Drug Court Planning Initiative at the time the application is submitted, special consideration will be given to drug courts that target substance abusing prison bound felony offenders who fall at least within the straddle cell category of the Michigan Sentencing Guidelines as a means to reduce the state's burden on the costs of imprisonment. In order to generate new levels of coordination and partnership, drug courts which focus on prison bound populations should work with local community corrections advisory boards under Michigan's Community Corrections Act (Public Act 511), parole and probation offices, substance abuse coordinating agencies, and other stakeholders.

Federal funds awarded will not support travel activities, however, local funds in the form of match may be used in the travel line item category to support such activities.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the MOU requirements outlined in the drug court legislation P.A. 224 of 2004, drug courts must also enter into an MOU with the local Substance Abuse Coordinating Agency. Drug courts must also attach a separate budget sheet to the application that outlines the other sources of funding that the drug court is receiving; in particular, all sources of funds for substance abuse treatment. These documents must be attached to the application at the time of submission.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES, AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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| Goal # 1 | Reducing the demand for drugs by breaking the cycle of drug use through drug treatment courts. |
| Objective #1 | Integrate alcohol and other drug treatment services with justice system case processing. |
| Activities | Offer the potential for many different levels and modalities of treatments. Develop adequate case tracking and processing systems. |
| Objective #2 | Using a non-adversarial approach, prosecution and defense counsel promote public safety while protecting participants' due process rights. |
| Activities | All program participants must be formally charged and adjudicated. The program must be limited to non-violent offenders. |
| Objective #3 | Eligible participants should be identified early in accordance with formal selection criteria and promptly placed in the drug court program. |
| Activities | Prior to implementation, selection criteria must be developed. Sophisticated case management also must be in place to screen candidates for successful intervention. Each participant must be given a formal needs assessment evaluation by a treatment professional at the initiation of the program. |
| Objective #4 | Provide access to a continuum of alcohol, drug, and other related treatment, employment and rehabilitation-based services. |
| Activities | A broad variety of treatment and rehabilitation services should be made available to participants. Grantees must use the information obtained from the needs assessment to match participants with appropriate services. In addition, adult participants must be provided with employment assistance. Grantees are encouraged to use the 12- |

step and faith-based treatment services that are present in their community. Family based treatment should also be emphasized.

Coordination with local community correction advisory boards, probation and parole representatives, coordinating agencies, and law enforcement agencies, is encouraged in order to access services for drug court participants.

Objective #5	Abstinence must be monitored by frequent alcohol and other drug testing.
Activities	Prior to program implementation, grantees must develop a drug testing policy. This policy should include both fixed interval and random drug tests. The number of random drug tests administered should be proportionate to the results of past drug tests.
Objective #6	A coordinated strategy governs drug court responses to participants' compliance.
Activities	<p>Grantees are encouraged to develop shared information systems with other members of the local criminal justice community. Participation in the program must be included as a condition of probation. Probation conditions should be included in LEIN. Grantees should dedicate adequate staff time to the case management of program participants. If staff resources are available, a full time case manager, treatment coordinator, or probation officer should be assigned to provide case management.</p> <p>For circuit court drug courts, coordination with local probation, parole, and law enforcement officials should be well defined.</p>
Objective #7	Ongoing judicial interaction with each drug court participant is essential.
Activities	A system of graduated sanctions for program violations should be developed prior to implementation. Incentives should also be incorporated into the program. Grantees must also develop a court appearance schedule for all participants to appear before a judge so that periodic status reports can be developed. Program participants should be required to make a contribution toward program costs. The nature of the participant contribution (e.g., cash payment, community service) should be determined by court personnel.
Objective #8	Monitoring and evaluation measure the achievement of program goals and gauge effectiveness.

Activities	<p>Assessment of program processing and outcomes of drug courts is required. The first year of drug court operation should include adequate comparison groups, which may include a plan for random assignment of individuals to treatment and non-treatment control groups.</p> <p>For Drug Courts targeting otherwise prison bound felons, monitoring and reporting of Michigan Sentencing Guideline scores is essential as well as data to measure relapse and recidivism, defined as a new criminal conviction either during the program or after graduation.</p>
Objective #9	Continuing interdisciplinary education promotes effective drug court planning, implementation, and operations.
Activities	Monthly (or more frequent) meetings of project personnel are necessary.
Objective #10	Forging partnerships among drug courts, public agencies, and community-based organizations generates local support and enhances drug court effectiveness.
Activities	<p>The development of partnerships and increased collaboration at the local and state level are encouraged to maximize the effect of resources.</p> <p>Coordination with local probation, parole, community corrections advisory boards, coordinating agencies, substance abuse agencies, and law enforcement is required.</p>